

The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 20 August 1968



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THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
20 AUGUST 1968

1. Czechoslovakia

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2. Communist China

The army may have new authority to impose order on fighting factionalists. Recent editorials in the major Peking newspapers have contained the most forthright statements against the Red Guards since the latest decision to restore order was taken in July. The word now is that the "vanguard" role played by the Red Guards is ended, and they must subordinate themselves to the working class. This directive is being widely disseminated. It will probably prompt "worker-peasant teams"--supported by the army--to use harsher measures in their current efforts to bring under control university students, who are the backbone of the various Red Guard movements.

There is no indication that the emergence of this new line signals further changes in the Chinese leadership, but a report that the army has increased its patrolling of Peking streets may be a sign of tension.

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3. Communist China

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4. Israel-Jordan

The question of which comes first--direct negotiations or the exchange of substantive positions through some sort of intermediary--is still bedeviling Jarring's effort to find a Middle East settlement. The Jordanians had understood that Eban was willing to get into substantive matters in indirect explorations with Jordan. Jarring has now told Husayn and Foreign Minister Rifai that Eban has reverted to insistence on direct negotiations. The Jordanians say that they could enter joint meetings if Israel would accept the principle of withdrawal by giving a prior indication of what lines it would propose as "secure and recognized boundaries"--even if such an Israeli proposal were unacceptable to Jordan.

Jarring will talk with the Israelis today. If he gets something from them, he will return to Amman on Friday.

5. Australia - Southeast Asia

Prime Minister Gorton appears to have made up his mind to pull all of Australia's forces out of Singapore and Malaysia by 1971, except for some advisers and a small air contingent. Gorton told Ambassador Crook he does not see "any sense" in an Australian troop commitment there. Gorton's policy could split his government, since some of its members do not believe in the "Fortress Australia" concept of defense.

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6. Greece

The embassy comments that the Greek regime has been shaken and sobered but not panicked by the attempt last week on the life of Papadopoulos. Its internal strength is undiminished and its position vis-a-vis Andreas Papandreou has probably been improved. The government apparently intends to hold the constitutional referendum on schedule-- 29 September. Former political leaders in Greece seem to recognize that there is no alternative to approving the constitution and then, hopefully, moving on to general elections.

7. Nigeria

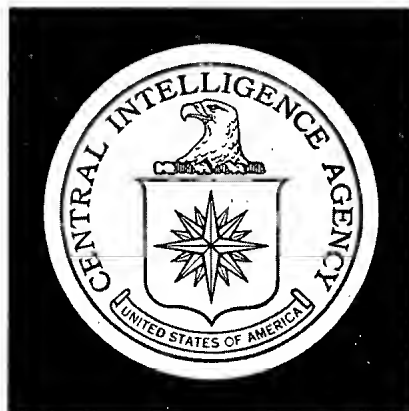
Beginning today the Red Cross is resuming direct relief flights to Biafra. The International Committee of the Red Cross is providing the coordinating umbrella for national Red Cross societies, which will supply chartered aircraft.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

- 1.) Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
- 2.) North Vietnamese Reflections of U.S
Political Attitudes

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Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
for the President's Eyes Only

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I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

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Communist Strategy Claims: Radio Hanoi has broadcast a military commentary from its army paper contending that the new style Communist military offensive used during Tet has forced the US to abandon offensive operations in South Vietnam. There are no more "search and destroy" operations, claims Chinh Binh, one of Hanoi's principal writers on the war in the South. US troops can no longer be spared for forays into Communist-controlled territory, he says, because they have to be deployed defensively to protect bases, population centers, and important communications lines already under allied control. This process, the author boasts, has made it possible for the Viet Cong to increase their control of the countryside.

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II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

More on the Republicans: On 15 August, in a commentary on the results of the Republican Party convention, Radio Hanoi concluded that so far as Vietnam is concerned, the Republicans have "no more to offer than the Johnson administration." Noting the party's "reactionary" platform plank on Vietnam and Nixon's approval of President Johnson's "obdurate" stand on reciprocity, the domestic service broadcast dismissed both parties as birds of "the same feather."

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